

APPENDIX NO. 639/1.

S T O W M A R K E T

U R B A N D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L

ANNUAL REPORT

of the

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

KATHLEEN M. HARDING, M.D., D.P.H., A.K.C.

for the year

1 9 6 8





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of the Council.

STAFF OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Dr. Kathleen M. Harding,  
M.D., D.P.H., A.K.C.

L. W. Brown, M.R.S.H., M.I.P.H.I.

Miss G. Thompson.

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STOWMARKET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Council Offices,  
Ipswich Road,  
STOWMARKET,  
Suffolk.

October, 1969.

To the Chairman and Members of the  
STOWMARKET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1968. This year a new procedure has been adopted and the reports of the Medical Officer of Health and the Public Health Inspector have been combined to form one report. It is hoped that in this arrangement the facts will be found to be more readily accessible and comprehensible than they were under the old system of two separate reports.

Mr. Brown is responsible for the comments on Housing, Food Hygiene, Water Supplies, Drainage and Sanitation, Refuse Collection, Noise and Pest Control. The remainder of the remarks are by myself.

During the year under consideration the population rose from 8,160 to 8,360. The standardised Birth Rate also rose from 15.3 per 1,000 to 16.2 per 1,000, but it is still below the National figure which is 16.9 per 1,000.

Our Stillbirth rate of 8 per 1,000 total births is below the National figure of 14, and our Infant Mortality rate of 8 per 1,000 live births is well below the National rate of 18.0.

The Standardised Death Rate has risen from the previous year's figure of 9.66 to 12.5 per 1,000 population. It is now higher than the National rate of 11.9. The National Rate is the highest figure for 5 years, and the rise is attributed to the severe weather in the early part of the year.

In the table relating to the causes of death it will be seen that there were two deaths occurring as the result of motor vehicle accidents. There were three deaths from accidents in the home. Two of these were from complications following falls in the home, and one was a very distressing case from burns sustained when the victim's clothes caught fire when they came in contact with an electric fire.

There has been an alarming increase, in Stowmarket, of deaths from diseases caused by or predisposed to by heavy smoking. These comprise Cancer of the lung, Bronchitis and Coronary disease (listed in the table as Ischaemic heart disease). In England and Wales the number of deaths from lung cancer in women rose by 5% with a total of 4,930. This is



what one would expect with this disease which is caused by heavy cigarette smoking over 20 to 30 years, for it was about this period of time that many women started to become heavy smokers. In England and Wales last year 23,896 men died of lung cancer. This is a staggering figure. It is now many years since it was discovered that the majority of people suffering from lung cancer were heavy smokers, and no stone has been left unturned both by the Ministry of Health and Health Authorities all over the Country to bring this fact home to people, yet their advice goes unheeded by the majority. Lung Cancer is a painful and distressing disease leading to a particularly horrible death, yet smokers continue to ignore the plain facts, which have been well substantiated by scientific evidence, with a blithe 'it won't happen to me'. Last year in Stowmarket ten people died of this disease.

Bronchitis is another disease in which smoking has an aggravating effect. Many, many people suffer from it. They become short of breath, have a chronic cough and feel always 'under the weather'. Many become chronic invalids and eventually some of them succumb. Last year deaths from Bronchitis in Stowmarket doubled from 3 to 6. Deaths from Pneumonia, in which the victims may have lessened their chances of survival owing to their previous smoking habits, rose from 5 to 13.

Coronary heart disease is definitely related to heavy smoking, which has the effect of raising the blood pressure and increasing the heart rate. In Stowmarket in 1968 this disease claimed 30 victims, a rise of 26% over last year's total.

Those facts do not make pleasant reading, but it is my duty to bring them to your notice. Deaths from Lung Cancer and Coronary disease usually claim victims who are in the prime of life, often with heavy family responsibilities. It is not just themselves that they are harming, but those nearest and dearest to them. I am sure that the majority of people would not wish this sort of thing to happen to their families. One of the reasons why the facts about the cause of Lung Cancer are ignored by so many people is that there is some years delay after the onset of heavy smoking before the disease makes its appearance.

Many doctors have taken note of the fact about heavy smoking being a cause of Lung Cancer. A questionnaire was sent some time ago to all doctors on the register, enquiring about their smoking habits. A few years later a further questionnaire was sent out, and from the statistics so obtained it was found that a very large proportion of the medical profession had given up smoking. They were in a particularly advantageous position to weigh the evidence about the causes of Lung Cancer, and they came to the obvious conclusion that by giving up smoking they would be able to avoid contracting this very unpleasant disease. Is it too much to hope that other people will follow their wise example?



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GENERAL STATISTICS

Area	...	...	...	...	...	1,696 acres.
Population (estimated mid-year Home Population, Registrar General's Figures)	...	...	...	...	...	8,360
Inhabited Houses	...	...	...	...	...	2,912
Rateable Value	...	...	...	...	...	£412,366
Estimated Sum represented by a penny rate	...	...	...	...	...	£1,694

VITAL STATISTICS(i) BIRTHS (Registrar General's Figures)Live Births.

			M.	F.	Total.
Total	...	...	54.	72.	126.
Legitimate	...	...	53.	69.	122.
Illegitimate	...	...	1.	3.	4.

Birth Rate.

Crude Birth Rate per 1,000 population	=	15.1
Per 1,000 home population - England and Wales	=	16.9
Comparability Factor	=	1.07
Ratio of Local Adjusted Rate to National Rate	=	0.96
Standardised Birth Rate	=	16.2

Still Births.

			M.	F.	Total
Total	...	...	-.	1.	1.
Legitimate	...	...	-.	1.	1.
Illegitimate	...	...	-.	-.	-.



Still Birth Rate:-

Per 1,000 total live and still births	=	8.
- do - England and Wales	=	14.0.

Infant Mortality (Under One Year)

		<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total ...	...	l.	-.	l.
Legitimate	...	l.	-.	l.
Illegitimate	...	-.	-.	-.

Deaths of Infants Under Four Weeks of Age

		<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total ...	...	l.	-.	l.
Legitimate	...	l.	-.	l.
Illegitimate	...	-.	-.	-.

Deaths of Infants Under One Week of Age

		<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
Total ...	...	l.	-.	l.
Legitimate	...	l.	-.	l.
Illegitimate	...	-.	-.	-.

Infantile Mortality Rate:-

Per 1,000 live births	=	8.
- do - England and Wales	=	18.0.

ii) DEATHS (Registrar General's Figures).

		<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
ALL CAUSES	...	68	51	119

Death Rate:-

Crude Death Rate per 1,000 home population	=	14.2
Per 1,000 home population - England & Wales	=	11.9
Comparability Factor	=	0.88
Ratio of Local Adjusted Death Rate to National Rate	=	1.05
Standardised Death Rate	=	12.5



CAUSES OF DEATH

	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total 1968.</u>	<u>Total 1967.</u>
Malignant neoplasms - stomach	2	2	4	2
" " - lung, bronchus	6	4	10	6
" " - breast	-	3	3	1
" " - uterus	-	-	-	2
Other malignant neoplasms etc.	4	4	8	9
Benign and unspecified neoplasms	-	1	1	-
Diabetes Mellitus	1	-	1	-
Leukaemia, Aleukaemia	-	-	-	1
Anaemias	1	-	1	-
Chronic rheumatic heart disease	1	-	1	-
Hypertensive disease	-	3	3	-
Ischaemic heart disease	22	8	30	22
Other forms of heart disease	4	2	6	6
Cerebrovascular disease	7	6	13	8
Other diseases of circulatory system	1	1	2	6
Influenza	2	1	3	-
Pneumonia	6	7	13	5
Bronchitis and emphysema	4	2	6	3
Asthma	-	1	1	-
Other diseases of respiratory system	1	-	1	-
Peptic ulcers	-	1	1	2
Other diseases of digestive system	-	1	1	-
Hyperplasia of prostate	2	-	2	-
Diseases of musculo-skeletal system	1	-	1	-
Birth injury, difficult labour etc.	1	-	1	-
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	-	-	-	6
Motor vehicle accidents	1	1	2	2
All other accidents	1	2	3	4
Suicide and self-inflicted injuries	-	1	1	1
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>86</b>



COMPARATIVE TABLE FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS.

	1965	1966	1967	1968	England and Wales 1968.
Inhabited houses	2729	2769	2841	2912	-.
Population (Registrar General's figures)	8050	8060	8160	8360	-.
Live births	125	116	117	126	-.
Standardised Birth Rate per 1,000 population	16.61	15.4	15.3	16.2	16.9
Deaths of Infants under One year	2	Nil	1	1	-.
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 Live Births	7.2	Nil	9	8	18.0
Standardised Death Rate per 1,000 population	12.66	11.9	9.66	12.5	11.9

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (Excluding Tuberculosis) - Compiled from Notifications received.

Diseases	Ages							Total	Admitted to Hospital	Deaths
	1/2	3/4	5/9	10/14	15/24	25+	Age Unknown			
Measles	3	6	4	-	1	-	-	14	-	-
Whooping Cough	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-
Food Poisoning	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-	-
Meningo-coccal Infection	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-
	<u>TOTALS:-</u>							18	1	-



NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (Continued).

New legislation was issued in the Autumn to amend the notification laws relating to certain infectious diseases. All provisions governing notifications of infectious diseases and food poisoning are now found in Sections 47 to 49 of the new Health Services and Public Health Act, 1968, and The Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations, 1968.

The infectious diseases now required to be notified by medical practitioners are:-

Acute encephalitis	Ophthalmia neonatorum
Acute meningitis	Paratyphoid Fever
Acute Poliomyelitis	Plague
Anthrax	Relapsing Fever
Cholera	Scarlet Fever
Diphtheria	Smallpox
Dysentery (amoebic or bacillary)	Tetanus
Infective Jaundice	Tuberculosis
Leprosy	Typhoid Fever
Leptospirosis	Typhus
Malaria	Whooping Cough
Measles	Yellow Fever

The following are no longer required to be notified:-

Acute Influenza Pneumonia	Erysipelas
Acute Primary Pneumonia	Membranous Croup
Acute Rheumatism	Puerperal Pyrexia

The responsibility for notifying diseases now rests exclusively upon medical practitioners, whereas before the householder was also jointly responsible. The new law also provided for an increase in notification fees to 5s. Od.

18 cases of notifiable infectious diseases were notified during the year.

TUBERCULOSIS.

- (i) No new cases were notified during the year.
- (ii) One case was removed from the Register on his departure to another district.
- (iii) Cases on the Register at the end of the year:-

<u>Pulmonary</u>			<u>Non-Pulmonary</u>		
<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>F.</u>	<u>Total</u>
5.	1.	6.	2.	1.	3.



VACCINATIONS AND IMMUNISATIONS. (Figures supplied by the  
County Medical Officer of Health)

1968.      1967.      1966.

(i) SMALLPOX VACCINATIONS.

Primary vaccinations	...	...	45.	56.	79.
Re-vaccinations ...	...	...	8.	3.	5.

(ii) IMMUNISATIONS.

(a) Primary.

Tetanus ...	...	...	23.	20.	10.
Diphtheria/Tetanus ...	...	...	1.	2.	-.
Diphtheria/Tetanus/ Whooping Cough ...	...	...	<u>119.</u>	<u>112.</u>	<u>47.</u>
			<u>143.</u>	<u>134.</u>	<u>57.</u>
			<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>

(b) Boosters.

Tetanus ...	...	...	70.	27.	3.
Diphtheria/Tetanus ...	...	...	45.	71.	4.
Diphtheria/Tetanus/ Whooping Cough ...	...	...	<u>131.</u>	<u>111.</u>	<u>109.</u>
			<u>246.</u>	<u>209.</u>	<u>116.</u>
			<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>

(iii) POLIOMYELITIS.

(a) Primary.

Oral vaccine ...	...	...	119.	157.	146.
			<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>

(b) Boosters.

Oral vaccine ...	...	...	164.	111.	3.
			<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>	<u>=====</u>

(iv) MEASLES.

104.

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SECTION 47 OF THE NATIONAL ASSISTANCE ACT, 1948.

No persons were found sufficiently chronically ill and unable to fend for themselves that it became necessary to invoke the provisions of Section 47 of the Act to enforce hospitalization.

PUBLIC SWIMMING BATHS.

There is one open air swimming bath which is owned and maintained by the Council. It is supplied with mains water.

The water is treated with break-point chlorination and is filtered. It is changed at the rate of 20,000 gallons per hour. The pool is emptied completely and cleaned out once a year.

Laboratory examination of the water during the year showed it to be maintained in a most satisfactory bacteriological condition.

HEALTH SERVICES IN THE DISTRICT.

(a) Home Nursing.

Under the County Council's Scheme one district nurse/midwife is resident in the District.

(b) Home Helps.

Miss K. M. Tillett is the County Council's home help organiser, and arranges for home helps to be made available in approved cases. The service is principally available to the elderly and disabled to enable them to maintain their independence in their own homes as an alternative to possible hospitalization. The problem family, the mother after confinement, and the family with the temporary loss of its housewife and mother are others in the categories recognised for home help service, in order to ease their burden during a temporary period of stress.

(c) Welfare Foods Service.

Welfare foods are available on Wednesday afternoons at the Fairfield Hill Clinic, and are also available Mondays to Fridays at the local Council Offices.

(d) Child-Minding Service.

A creche is provided by members of the W.R.V.S. in the Constitutional Hall, Milton Road, every Thursday for the benefit of young mothers visiting the Town for their market day shopping.

(e) Health Visiting.

One full-time Health Visitor, Mrs. S. Butler, serves Stowmarket under the County Council's scheme. She is actively engaged in promoting the welfare of the family, and her especial interests are the less able, the pre-school age, the physically handicapped and the problem family.



(f) Clinic Services.

The County Council's Clinic is situated in Fairfield Hill, and affords a wide variety of services:-

Infant Welfare Clinic is held each Wednesday, 2 - 4.00 p.m.

Mothercraft and relaxation classes are attended twice a month on the first and third Tuesdays.

Speech therapy sessions are held at weekly intervals by appointment.

The Chest Clinic, with a Consultant Chest Physician in attendance, is held twice a month on the second and fourth Thursdays.

Family planning advice is available on the first and third Thursdays, 2 - 3.30 p.m., and 6 - 7.30 p.m.

Ophthalmic clinic sessions take place on the first and third Thursday mornings.

Chest physiotherapy treatment is available on Wednesday mornings.

The Dental Clinic operates as necessary.

A Diabetics Clinic is held once a month on the fourth Friday morning.

A chiropody service is available on Monday afternoons.

(g) Venereal Diseases Clinic.

Anyone who has risked infection, and any extra-marital sexual relationship constitutes this risk, should use the discreet services of the Venereal Diseases Clinics, which are equipped for reliable diagnosis and speedy and convenient treatment. Two such Clinics are available to the local population as follows:-

(i) Ipswich and East Suffolk Hospital, (Skin Dept.), Anglesca Road Wing, Ipswich.

<u>Males:</u>	Mondays 5.30 p.m. - 7.30 p.m.
	Fridays 1.00 p.m. - 2.30 p.m.

<u>Females:</u>	Mondays 7.30 p.m. - 8.30 p.m.
	Tuesdays 2.00 p.m. - 4.00 p.m.
	Fridays 3.30 p.m. - 5.30 p.m.

(ii) West Suffolk General Hospital, Bury St. Edmunds.

Males and Females: Wednesdays 10.30 a.m. - 12 noon.

(h) Laboratory Facilities.

The Council utilises the services of the Public Health Laboratory Service for the bacteriological examination work which forms an essential part of the Department's duties.



HOUSING.New Dwellings.

Private enterprise continued apace despite the heavy cost of borrowed money, and 109 new dwellings were added to the Town's housing stock. Development was principally on the Edgars Farm, the Combs Wood and the Abbots Hall Estates.

The old obsolete Ham Row terrace finally was cleared to make way for a new and very successful Council bungalow estate of 16 gas-fired centrally heated bungalows, 9 of which were completed and allocated by the year's end.

Proposed New Dwellings.

The end of Phase I of the Edgars Farm Estate development was commenced in 1968 and scheduled for completion by mid-1969. Abbots Hall Estate, too, was nearing the completion of its Danescourt Avenue and Viking Road, but the developers of this site were proposing to start work on further residential development in Onehouse Road in 1969.

As far as the Council and those awaiting rehousing are concerned, by far the most interesting prospect was the Council's proposed development of the Home Meadow site adjoining Chilton Hall Farm. The Council's delegation to the Minister of Housing and Local Government convinced his representatives that there was a need for 80 family units, the careful deployment of which would help meet sub-standard house clearance displacements and also release accommodation suitable for the elderly - two priorities acceptable to the Minister. As a result of the Council's representations the contract was allowed to proceed in two stages of 40 houses, each spread over the years 1969 and 1970.

The number of elderly people both on the Council's general waiting list and occupying sub-standard houses in the Council's official clearance programme, indicates the need for additional accommodation tailored to the needs of the elderly. It would appear that this accommodation should in part be more centrally situated than extensions of the existing Council housing estates allow, and might also incorporate warden-type accommodation for the single elderly.

House Improvement.

Again in 1968 no compulsory improvement of houses was forced upon landlords. No improvement areas were declared. No formal applications for improvements were received from tenants of private houses.

The Council pressed on with the modernisation of its dwellings, 36 in Hillside being improved during the year to the Discretionary Grant standard with the aid of financial assistance from the Government. Most Council tenants are anxious to have modern amenities installed, and the Council is tackling the modernisation of its houses with vigour.



The rate of improvement of private dwellings showed no significant alteration. Discretionary and Standard Grants continued to be available, and encouragement given to take advantage of the generous schemes on offer to house owners. The Grant most favoured is the Standard Improvement Grant, and most owners prefer to provide a bathroom by way of an extension so as to retain the maximum bedroom accommodation; most of the houses in the District are two and three bedroom units, and although additional expenditure is incurred, the investment in this alternative is encouraged.

The following summarises Grant aided improvements by private owners in 1968:-

Standard Grants:

Applications approved in respect of owner-occupied dwellings	17
Applications approved in respect of tenanted dwellings	3
Owner-occupied dwellings improved	18
Tenanted dwellings improved	3
Amount paid in Grants	...     ...     ...     ...     £4,152.
Amenities provided:	
Baths	20
Washhandbasins	21
Inside waterclosets	20
Hot water systems	21
Food stores	19
Average Grant per house	...     ...     ...     ...     £197. 15s.

Discretionary Grants:

Applications approved	...	...	...	...	1
Dwellings improved	...	...	...	...	-
Amount approved for Grant	...	...	...	...	£400

There are still many houses without basic amenities, and there is therefore much still to be done to bring all homes up to date. In the meantime babies are born, children develop, illness occurs, the aged mature - and all need basic modern amenities not the obsolescence of a by-gone age.

Unfit, Inadequate or Otherwise Unsuitable Housing.

Steady progress continued to be made in dealing with the Council's official sub-standard house clearance programme. Rapid progress is not yet possible until more accommodation becomes available for rehousing purposes, and to that extent it is hoped that the Home Meadow development will improve the situation.



Nos. 1 - 23 Spring Row, empty and derelict, appeared to get no nearer voluntary demolition. An eyesore patiently tolerated by Cardinals Road occupants, the terrace became dangerous to children attracted to play in its environment, and representations were made to the Council by the Medical Officer of Health to declare it a clearance area.

Nos. 1 and 3 Ipswich Road, of picturesque construction and architectural interest, but derelict for some year, became a main road eyesore. Informal representations failed to provoke the necessary voluntary action to demolish and clear the site, and the Council fell back upon the provisions of Section 16 of the Housing Act, 1957 to enforce their demolition; the site has been usefully redeveloped, a course that invariably follows such positive action.

The provisions of the Public Health Act, 1961, which were intended to give powers to Councils to deal more expeditiously with derelict buildings, require revision to enable such problems as are referred to above to be dealt with more readily.

During the year the Council dealt with a number of individual unfit houses incapable of economic repair to a fit standard as follows:-

Demolition Orders (6):

1, Pound Lane	- occupants awaiting rehousing.
28, Stowupland Street	- empty, awaiting demolition.
30, Stowupland Street	- empty, awaiting demolition.
32, Stowupland Street	- empty, awaiting demolition.
73, Bury Street	- vacant, occupants rehoused.
75, Bury Street	- occupants awaiting rehousing.

Closing Orders (8):

13, Union Street	- vacant, occupants rehoused.
15, Union Street	- vacant.
14, Cardinals Road	- vacant,
16, Cardinals Road	- vacant, occupants rehoused.
28, Cardinals Road	- occupants awaiting rehousing.
40, Cardinals Road	- occupants awaiting rehousing.
5, Poplar Hill	- vacant.
15, Walnut Tree Walk	- occupants awaiting rehousing.

Undertaking accepted to not relet (1):

9, Combs Ford	- vacant, occupants rehoused.
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Statutory notices to remedy housing defects were served in respect of 12 dwellings. 6 of the notices were complied with, one house was vacated, one subsequently closed and four purchased for Grant aided improvement and repair.

Two tenants applied for assistance in accordance with the Rent Act, 1957. They were suitably advised in their representations to their landlords, and their differences were resolved without resort to local authority certification.



Rehousing of Those in Need.

A number of cases were investigated to determine whether applicants had grounds for their being given special consideration because of socio-medical aspects of their circumstances. Such cases are thoroughly investigated before representations are made to the Council, where such an approach is justified. The Council operates a points scheme for allocating its dwellings through its Housing (Tenants and Welfare) Committee, but the scheme is such as to allow the consideration of special cases for allocation without necessarily having regard to their points position. This is as it should be, for the Council's rehousing service is intended to meet need not patience.

Apart from the nine Hamilton Way bungalows completed at the end of the year, the Council was dependent upon vacated properties to relieve those with a housing problem, and to that extent their resources were very limited. Of the dwellings allocated in 1968, 14 were provided for the rehousing of those displaced by closing or demolition action. The most worthwhile feature of the Council's sub-standard house clearance programme for some years was apparent in the treatment that it was possible to afford a number of elderly occupants of sub-standard houses who were moved from very unsuitable houses into modern, centrally-heated bungalows, affording every convenience and comfort that one could wish for.

Caravans.

1968 saw the introduction of a new Caravan Act which (a) made provision for security of tenure for caravanners on residential sites, and (b) made suspended provision for dealing with the gypsy problem. Twelve months after the Act was introduced the provisions relating to gypsies are still not given statutory effect, although the County Council has been urged by the Minister to survey gypsy needs, and if necessary set up sites for them, these sites to be equipped and run by district councils.

A number of gypsies arrived in the Urban District about the time that the new Act was introduced, and in support of the new legislation they were allowed to settle temporarily unhindered, although the sites enjoyed neither planning consent nor licensing as ordinarily required by the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act, 1960. After some months it appeared that the gypsies might as well be permanently settled and had had as much opportunity of purchasing and equipping sites in accordance with the 1960 Act as any other citizen is required to do. They were destined to move in 1969, after some 7 - 8 months on the sites.

The situation as regards caravans in the District at the end of the year is summarised as follows:-

Pickercel's Inn, Stowupland Street	(4)	Seasonal showmen's quarters, exempt.
Combs Ford Square	(4)	Permanent residential, unlicensed.
Caravan Sales, Bury Road	(1)	Permanent residential, unlicensed.
Ambleside, Finborough Road	(1)	Permanent residential, licensed.
	(2)	Seasonal quarters, exempt.
Rear Lime Tree Place	(1)	Permanent residential, unlicensed.
O.S. 325 (Sandpits)	(4)	Gypsy caravans, unlicensed.
O.S. 331	(3)	Gypsy caravans, unlicensed.



FOOD.

Two cases of food poisoning were notified by local practitioners during 1968. The two related cases were very ill and immobilised for two or three days in a most distressing attack of vomiting and diarrhoea, with feverishness and abdominal pain, symptoms generally associated with an attack of this nature. Exhaustive enquiry and examination of food likely to have been involved revealed no causal organism, and the source of these cases remained a mystery.

Routine visits were paid to the 123 food premises in the Town during the year, principally to maintain reasonable standards having regard to those prescribed by the Food Hygiene Regulations. In 22 cases it was necessary to draw proprietor's attention to deficiencies, but in no cases were proceedings instituted.

Food hygiene demands handling of clean food in clean premises by properly equipped clean people, educated to the needs of their job. It is difficult to permute all of these factors into the correct combination. Clean premises and proper equipment can be enforced by inspection with the backing of legislation, but the Department's resources for education are somewhat limited.

To add to the normal difficulties, some firms are struggling with the effects of staff shortages. Most food workers work very hard, their rewards are not high and, by the rapid powers of the human digestive system, appreciation is short-lived. Added to this now are late-night shopping and extra pressures demanded by S.E.T. taxes, price-cutting etc. Some food traders express understandable concern.

The following is a list of the food businesses in the Town to which the Food Hygiene (General) Regulations, 1960 apply; all meet the requirements of Regulations 16 and 19 in the provision of washing facilities.

Bakers (3)	Sweet Confectioners (9)
Cake Confectioners (3)	Wet Fish Merchant (1)
Fish Friers (6)	Chemists (3)
Wine Merchant (1)	Public Houses (17)
Catering Premises (25)	Sweet Confectionery Wholesaler (1)
Butchers (6)	Meat Products Manufactury (1)
Fruiterers (7)	General shops (21)

There are no ice cream manufacturing premises in the Town, although one local cafe and a number of mobiles operated with soft ice cream machinery using pre-pasteurised cold mixes. 49 premises were registered in accordance with Section 16 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1955, 38 for the storage and sale of ice cream, and 11 for the manufacture of meat products or fish-frying. Two new registrations were effected during the year.

Ice cream samples were purchased for examination to test the effectiveness of pasteurisation and general hygiene. The results are summarised as follows:-

Grade	Mobiles				Premises			
	I	II	III	IV	I	II	III	IV
Soft Ice-Cream	1	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Other Ice-Cream	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-



There are no egg pasteurisation plants in the District.

All milk sold through the six registered milk distributors is either pasteurised or sterilised and free from pathogenic organisms. The East Suffolk County Council, through its County Health Inspector, undertakes the routine surveillance of milk supplies including sampling and examination to detect tubercle, brucella and anti-biotics, and also to establish the efficiency of heat treatment processes at the pasteurisation and sterilisation plants. No adverse reports were received in respect of local suppliers in 1968.

Few complaints were received concerning the sale of defective food during 1968:-

One local housewife, drawing attention to a pack of rancid butter that she had purchased from a local vendor, enabled further rancid stocks to be withdrawn before any further harm was done. Occurring just before Christmas, the lady saved a number of families from distasteful disappointment during the festivities.

A wrapped sliced farmhouse loaf was found by one consumer to be soiled with black oil. The complainant wished the matter to be taken no further than to investigate the cause of the soiling of the bread and its remedy. Defective transfer rollers at the manufacturing bakery were found to be the cause, and further trouble eliminated.

Bread again figured in a complaint when a local housewife found a "lump of dirty dough" in a white bread loaf. Both the complainant and the manufacturing baker were agreed that it was, without doubt, a piece of stale dirty dough, probably impregnated with oil. Every reasonable precaution must be taken to safeguard not only the consumer but also the allegedly offending food supplier, and the specimen was submitted to the Public Analyst for qualified examination. It happened that the alien material was nothing more than a piece of dry uncooked dough devoid of dirt, although bearing an unsavoury appearance.

Persistent complaints of the rancidity of butter sold by a local retailer were brought to the Department's attention by the shopkeeper, anxious to obtain a satisfactory explanation for a situation which baffled him and caused discontent among his customers. Full enquiry of the manufacturer, the distributing wholesaler and all concerned revealed not readily apparent deficiencies in the chain of distribution, storage and stock rotation, and it was possible to offer suitable advice to rectify this trouble.

Unfit foodstuffs seized on routine visits to food premises or, more generally, voluntarily surrendered by vendors, were disposed of at the Council's Refuse Tip. Foods dealt with are detailed as follows:-

Cooked meat and meat products	63 lbs.
Canned meats	185 lbs.
Other canned foods	69 lbs.
Other foods	302 lbs.
<b>Total:</b>	<b>619 lbs.</b>



Meat inspection at the one licensed slaughterhouse occupied by Messrs. W. H. Aldis & Sons at 47, Bury Street, presented no problems. A local private veterinary practice provides relief in case of leave. The income from slaughterhouse meat inspection charges for the year amounted to £49. 14s. Od.

The following schedule details post mortem examination of carcases and organs at the slaughterhouse during 1968:-

	CATTLE EXCLUDING COWS	COWS	CALVES	SHEEP AND LAMBS	PIGS
Number killed ... ... ...	319	-	-	393	-
Number not inspected ... ...	-	-	-	-	-
<u>All diseases except tuberculosis and cysticercosis:-</u>					
Whole carcases condemned ...	-	-	-	-	-
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ... ...	78	-	-	22	-
Percentage of numbers inspected affected with diseases other than tuberculosis and cysticerci ...	24.45	-	-	5.59	-
<u>Tuberculosis and cysticerci:</u> No cases of tuberculosis or cysticercosis arose					

No significant disease conditions were found, condemnations being confined principally to organs, some cattle being affected with pneumonia and pleurisy, and liver abcesses, and the majority of sheep being affected by parasitic infestation of the lungs.

All unfit meat at the slaughterhouse is collected by the Suffolk Fat and Bone Meal Co. Ltd., Oulton Broad, for collection and disposal in accordance with the Meat (Staining and Sterilisation) Regulations.

The total weight of meat and offal condemned at the slaughterhouse in 1968 was 7 cwts. 78 lbs.

The question of some meat and offal supplies, principally those intended for the pet food market and reaching the consumer in a raw state, gave cause for some concern. A County-wide investigation revealed unstained, unsterilised raw pet meat supplies, which apparently emanated from a knackers yard. A local vendor receiving supplies of this meat was suitably advised and equipped with staining material to ensure compliance with the Meat (Staining and Sterilisation) Regulations, to enable purchasers to identify the meat as unfit for human consumption. Stained or not, this meat presents a possible hazard in the home in its raw state, and new legislation requiring its prior sterilisation is welcomed.



The East Suffolk County Council keeps under surveillance a multiplicity of matters relating to food and drugs to protect the consumer against harm, deficiency and fraud. In Stowmarket this valuable consumer protection service is afforded by the Chief Weights and Measures Inspector, Mr. P. Hosking, and his District Inspector, Mr. N. P. Pollard, and he reports as follows on the work of his Department in 1968:-

<u>".....Samples</u>	<u>Genuine</u>	<u>Unsatisfactory</u>
Baking powder	1	
Bread	1	
Cereals	2	
Christmas Pudding	1	
Jams	2	
Meat Products	3	1
Sausages	1	1
Soup	1	
Sugar Confectionery	4	
Tinned Fruit	1	
Whisky	3	
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total:	20	2
	<hr/>	<hr/>

"The two unsatisfactory samples, one of pork sausages and one of tinned chopped pork, were both found to have a low percentage of meat. Both manufacturers (of national size) were given warnings by the County Council and undertook to comply with the regulations in future....."

#### WATER SUPPLIES.

The District's water supplies are in the hands of the Ipswich Water Authority. During 1968-69 Councillor Beaney was the Council's representative on the governing Authority.

Waterworks at bores in Station Road and Poplar Hill are supplemented by balance supplies brought in mains from outside sources to serve a small part of the District off Combs Lane and Onehouse Road.

Native water is free from bacterial contamination but receives a precautionary chlorination before being introduced into the supply.

The physical quality of the local water in some parts of the District gives rise to complaints regarding its unpleasant taste and odour, and the nuisance created by an excessive iron content. The community has tolerated this physical quality for a considerable time, but is becoming less inclined to do so. Many properties in the Town are supplied by communal service pipes; in some cases these pipes, frequently of aged galvanised iron, have become inadequate to the task of increased demands and, in some instances, have been responsible for producing or contributing to excessive iron-tainting of the supply. As new amenities are provided by way of the grant-aid schemes for house improvement, the opportunity is frequently taken to provide a new independent service pipe with an individual mains connection; the cost of this has become not inconsiderable and sometimes deterring.



Although the Ipswich Water Authority is now responsible for the water supply and the works and mains networks, the Urban Council continues to have a responsibility to ensure that houses are supplied by their owners with adequate supplies of wholesome water in pipes inside the house. Seven statutory notices were issued requiring houses to have an adequate supply of water re-instated by the remedy of service defects.

Five houses in the District are without an inside supply of water in pipes, but all are included in the Council's sub-standard house clearance programme and destined for demolition or renovation.

By Circular 24/68, the Minister of Health reiterated his view that fluoridation of water supplies is an established and well-proven health measure which confers substantial benefits to dental health safely.

The balance water supplied to a minority of the community from mains sources outside the District contains the optimum amount of fluoride, whereas the native water contains an insignificant amount. The minority of our children lucky enough to have this foreign water have an advantage over the majority and should, all other factors being equal, have less troublesome teeth throughout their lives. The majority of the children however must depend upon their parents to try to ensure proper diet and instil the teeth-cleaning habit, whilst at the same time inhibiting sweet-eating and between-meals snacks.

To draw attention to the need for greater pride in one's teeth and to promote the relevant factors to which more attention needs to be paid, part of the Council's display stand at the Carnival Week Trades Fair Exhibition was devoted to the subject, and Officers of the East Suffolk County Council's Dental Section kindly gave their time to be in attendance at the Exhibit and answer the public's enquiries.

#### DRAINAGE AND SANITATION.

The Council's sewer network and Sewage Works are maintained by the Council's Engineer and Surveyor. The treatment of complex liquor from this industrialised market town in a hilltop works overlooking the town, and without intruding into the atmospheric environment, was again achieved. Similarly the Suffolk and Norfolk River Authority, in its Annual Report for 1968, commended the good quality of the Works' effluent discharged to the River Gipping.

Because of road-fund tax laws, the Gipping Rural District Council surrounding our District had to withdraw its cesspool emptying service from our District; the Council decided against substituting a subsidised emptying service for some of the 46 domestic occupiers living in unsewered properties, there being adequate alternative private contractors available.

Three of the public conveniences are obsolete, those on the recreation grounds and the gentlemen's conveniences in Marriotts Walk. As a first stage in bringing these amenities up to an acceptable standard, the erection of new conveniences on the principal Recreation Ground was commenced during the year.



21 private houses were equipped with internal sanitary conveniences and other basic modern amenities in 1968. Many hundreds still suffer the cold trek to some monstrosity of a closet that only deserves to be kept at the bottom of the garden, but the anticipated increases in the improvement grant schemes and the progressively colder weather to be anticipated in this latter half of the century should change this position somewhat for the better.

For many years residents living in proximity to the Combs Watercourse have complained of pollution of the stream associated with a most sickening smell in the area. As a result of a complainant co-operating to furnish the Council with information, it was possible to take a sample of the stream's water late one summer evening, when a particularly vile smell lay over the neighbourhood. Analysis of the sample indicated a heavy organic pollution from a specific source outside the District's boundaries, and the information was forwarded to the River Authority for attention.

#### REFUSE.

The Council's refuse collection and disposal service is operated by the Council's Engineer and Surveyor. The enforcement of public health legislation relating to litter and insanitary matter and refuse generally, except abandoned vehicles, is enforced by the Council through the Public Health Department.

The Council affords the local community a weekly refuse collection service using the skep system and a Shelvoke and Drewry fore and aft tipper vehicle. Refuse is disposed of at low-lying land suitable for reclamation off Bury Road. A waste paper recovery service is incorporated, this material being baled at the Council's depot for sale to Thames Board Mills. A weekly trade refuse collection is also provided at the cost of the traders using the service.

Free collection of extraneous and bulky refuse is afforded to householders by request, and the Council has also provided a concrete bay outside the Refuse Tip gates so that householders may dump their unwanted refuse in the evenings and at weekends when the Tip is closed, in a place from which the Council is better able to clear it than the hedges and ditches previously used for the purpose.

B.S.S. bins not exceeding  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cu. ft. in capacity are required by the Council. Over 1,000 Council dwellings are supplied with 2 and  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cu. ft. bins, and likewise 566 such bins were on issue to householders for an annual rental of 5s. Od. under the Council's municipal bin hire scheme. The remainder of the community is also very good and in few instances is it necessary to remind householders of the need for providing a proper bin for the sake of individual and community health, and for the sake of the refuse collectors who carry out an unpleasant task, generally very well.

At the beginning of the year, when considering annual estimates for 1968-69, the Council, mindful of the recommendations of the Government's Working Party on Refuse Storage and Collection, considered the possibility of introducing a paper sack system in substitution for the existing B.S.S. bin and skep system. The capital expenditure and running costs of introducing the scheme could not be entertained in current financial circumstances, and the Council decided not to proceed with the matter for the time being.



NOISE.

The legislation enforcing reasonable limits upon the noise in an environment consists of the Noise Abatement Act, 1960. It is quite effective for dealing with noise on fixed premises over a sufficiently long period of time that the abatement notice provisions, passing through the Committee structure of the Council, can be brought to effect. There is no adequate provision for safeguarding the individual against occurrences of noise lasting over a few days or weeks short of abatement notice procedure, although these can be very distressing. Straightforward punitive powers should be given to local authorities who can be trusted to use them justly, as ever.

During 1968, the trouble with the merry ice-cream men appeared to have been solved, for it was found that they used their chimes within the specified hours of 12 noon to 7 p.m. and also used them less persistently than hitherto.

Domestic bliss to which every householder is entitled can be wrecked by intolerable noise from neighbouring premises, and the noise energy does not have to be high for the emotional climate has a large say in the acceptance value of noises. The regular daily running of a noisy motor cycle in the confines of a small enclosed yard, and the acquisition of a truly beautiful but vociferous and belligerent cockerel by a terrace occupant, were both the subject of outraged complaint in 1968. Fortunately both the owner of the motor cycle and the owner of the cockerel were reasonable people and, when appropriate representations were made, readily abated the invasion of their neighbours' privacy, the one by curbing his Manx ambitions and the other by disposal of the bird.

Bell-ringing at the local parish Church of England was criticised on two occasions by a local resident living within the sonic shadow of the belfry. The Council gave considerable time to the matter so as to meet the reasonable needs of the Church and the associated campanologists, whilst at the same time not inflicting unnecessary and avoidable intrusion into the comfort of the neighbouring residents. It was decided to suggest that bell-ringing on weekdays be confined to Tuesday evenings 7 - 9.00 p.m., Saturdays from 10.00 a.m. - 7.00 p.m., and Church services which occurred on days other than Sundays.

Fear of noise, as much as possible dust and traffic hazards, unleashed the successful opposition of neighbouring residents in the Cardinalls Road area when a proposal was considered for planning approval to the establishing of a ready-mixed concrete factory on the site of the old Spring Row terrace.

During the year the Council, as a contribution to meeting the Minister's requirements and their own responsibilities in the matter of noise control, arranged for its public health staff to attend a Noise Course at the Hertfordshire College. The Course gave a useful introductory appreciation of the subject so far as the limitations of a Course comprising six half-days would allow. It could well be supplemented by more accessible local opportunities of a higher calibre than has hitherto been the case.

No noise measuring apparatus is owned by the Council, the few occasions when this has been required the Ipswich County Borough Public Health Department has very kindly made available its Dawes Noise Meter.



ATMOSPHERE.

No smoke control zones are designated in the District, although there is a statutory requirement that any fireplaces in all new dwellings must have grates capable of burning smokeless fuels.

The emission of metallurgical fume in the vicinity of the foundry cupolas proved troublesome to neighbouring factory personnel for a small part of the year, and occasionally also intruded into the Town area. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government issued an advisory memorandum in which certain recommendations were made to alleviate some of the effects of foundry cold blast cupola emissions. Short of the more sophisticated fume arrestment apparatus and extension of the flues to exceptional heights, the local foundry cupolas have met the basic recommendations. To achieve any further improvement, either increased flue height or fume arrestment will have to be introduced, the latter being the more preferable. However, the effectiveness of the use of electrical precipitators, venturi scrubbers and bag filters suitable for fine particulate fume arrestment are yet to be proven, and are undergoing experiment in hot blast cupolas. In the circumstances, it was considered preferable to tolerate the limited nuisance being created until such time as the Minister is in a position to comment on the success or otherwise of these types of arresting apparatus.

PEST CONTROL.

The Council joins with its neighbours, the Gipping Rural District Council, to employ a Rodent Operative to undertake its duties under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act, 1949, and to afford the local community a pest control service. The Operative is engaged in the Urban District on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturday mornings. Apart from keeping the District under survey to detect infestations of rats or mice, and treating the Council's own properties, the Operative is deployed to afford a service to private householders, free, and to business firms, on payment of a modest inclusive charge of 1ls. Od. per hour.

A summary of the work undertaken during the year is as follows:-

Total number of properties inspected as a result of complaint	123
Number of these properties infested with rats	107
Number of these properties infested with mice	13
Total number of properties inspected by routine survey	229
Number of these properties infested with rats	108
Number of these properties infested with mice	17
Number of infested properties treated by Local Authority	175
Total number of treatments carried out to effect rodent control	243

WORKPLACES.

Factories in the Urban District are powered, and, as such, most of the provisions of the Factories Act, 1961 are administered by H.M. Factories Inspectorate. The Council pays attention to the sanitary accommodation and the water supply provided for the use of factory employees.



WORKPLACES (Continued)

A summary of the premises and the work of inspection undertaken by the Council is shown as follows:-

Powered factories	54
Other premises	8
Number of inspections	39
Sanitary defects found	8
Unwholesome water supply	1

Two premises are registered in accordance with the Rag Flock and Other Filling Materials Act, 1951:-

- (i) Messrs. Glasswells Ltd., 57 Ipswich Street, - upholstery repairer.
- (ii) Messrs. J. Collins & Sons Ltd., Finborough Road - upholstered furniture manufacturer.

One dealer is registered in accordance with the Scrap Metal Dealers Act, 1964:-

Mr. V. O. Cracknell, 85, Needham Road.

The Council shares the administration of the Offices, Shops and Railway Premises Act, 1963 with H.M. Factories Inspectorate and the Fire Authority. The following statistics relate the situation in 1968:-

TABLE A  REGISTRA- TIONS AND GENERAL INSPEC- TIONS.	(1) Class of premises	(2) No. of premises registered during the year.	(3) Total no. of regis- tered premises at end of year.	(4) No. of regis- tered prems. receiving a general inspection during the year.
	Offices	1	35	9
	Retail shops	1	82	44
	Wholesale shops, warehouses	1	5	1
	Catering establishments open to the public, canteens.	1	9	7
	Fuel storage depots	-	2	2
	TOTALS:	4	133	63

TABLE B - NO. OF VISITS OF ALL KINDS TO  
REGISTERED PREMISES:

109.



TABLE C  ANALYSIS OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN REGIS- TERED PREMISES BY WORK- PLACE.	(1)	(2)
	Class of workplace	Number of persons employed
	Offices	214
	Retail shops	474
	Wholesale departments, warehouses	23
	Catering establishments open to the public	61
	Canteens	2
	Fuel storage depots	14
	Total:	788
	Total Males:	305
	Total Females:	483

Three non-fatal accidents were notified in accordance with the Act.

One involved a lady typist straining her wrist as a result of her being required to lift a brief carriage typewriter from her desk to an unsuitable, high cabinet on which it was stored when not in use. On investigation it was found that the room was quite inadequate to the activities it accommodated, although not statutorily overcrowded, and insufficient thought had been given to the furniture and equipment designs. Suitable advice was given, but the firm moved to new offices shortly after.

A severe cut to an index finger was a painful reminder to a young butcher's shop assistant of the occupational hazards of his calling. Investigation of the circumstances revealed no negligence on the part of his employer.

The third accident investigated also involved no deficiencies in the conditions of workplace, the young lady clerk involved suffering a painful and temporarily debilitating bruising of the tail and head from an inexplicable fall on a perfectly clear floor area.

#### MISCELLANEOUS.

One pet shop was licensed in accordance with the Pet Animals Act, 1951, and regular inspections revealed the welfare of the various creatures to be in capable hands. A case of human psittacosis, appearing to be related to the purchase of a parrot, was thoroughly investigated, but no evidence was obtained to support this.

One property was registered in accordance with the Animal Boarding Establishments Act, 1963, and this was restricted to 10 dogs.



In an endeavour to reduce the appalling loss of life by drowning accidents, currently about 1,000 each year, it behoves both inland and coastal authorities, whether or not they have any water hazards within their districts, to equip their people with more awareness and expertise in the use of recreational water. A deal of publicity was employed in Stowmarket in 1968 to lend support to the National Water Safety Campaign. Children attending local schools were furnished with posters and other material, and Water Safety Code books were distributed to youth organisations. With the public swimming pool and schools pools, all open-air ones, the local youngsters have the basic essentials for learning to swim, a value which one day may be responsible for saving their lives. More attention needs to be directed at making the conditions of the pools more comfortable, and heating the water and providing protection from the English weather are two important elements which could have a profound effect upon the population's swimming prowess.

As a further contribution to water safety, the Council arranged for a life-saving course to be held for proficient swimmers. The Council's pools attendant kindly gave his time for teaching, and all local youth organisations were circularised with an invitation to participate. Initial response was encouraging with about 30 promising to attend. In the event only 3 did so, and the course had to be abandoned. Disappointing, but not discouraging, and it is hoped the Council will try again another season.

In May, I attended the Annual Conference of the Royal Society of Health, and in September the Chairman of the Public Health Committee, Councillor G. L. Ince, with the Public Health Inspector, attended the Annual Conference of the Association of Public Health Inspectors. The Conferences with their exhibitions, addresses, and the opportunity for discussion, provide a worthwhile return to the ratepayer, and this year related to a variety of subject matter including:-

- Food Hygiene and Standards on the Continent.
- Housing - A Continuing Problem.
- Civic Amenities Act Part III - Disposal of Vehicles and Other Refuse.
- Air Pollution in the Federal Republic of Germany.
- Food Control and Consumer Protection.
- Totally Electric Concept.
- The Environmental and Sociological Problems of Housing.

During the year the Council continued its subscription to the Health Education Council and used its publicity material on a number of subjects. Bringing subject matter sufficiently to the attention of the public is time-absorbing and sometimes expensive, but education and publicity must play an increasingly prominent part in the public health sphere, for the public must be kept informed on a miscellany of matters relating to health including hygiene, housing, home safety, water safety etc. The commercial vendor appreciates the importance of advertising with quality publicity and with persistence, and the good health vendor needs to do likewise.

I should like to express my thanks to the Chairman and Members of the Public Health Committee for their continued encouragement and support during the year.

I am also very grateful to the Officers and Staff of the Council for their ever willing co-operation and assistance.

I am, Mr. Chairman, Madam and Gentlemen,  
Your Obedient Servant,

KATHLEEN M. HARDING

Medical Officer of Health.

